



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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## **Gov. Gregoire proclaims Aug. 5-11 Washington Farmers Market Week** ***Washington's 160 farmers markets benefit farmers and consumers***

**OLYMPIA** – The popularity of farmers markets continues to increase across the Evergreen State. Last year, shoppers made nearly 1.8 million trips, many of them repeat visits, to experience Washington's 160 farmers markets to buy nutritious foods, including fresh, locally grown produce, meats, cheeses and specialty food products.

To recognize strong consumer and farmer support for the markets, Gov. Chris Gregoire, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and the Washington State Farmers Market Association (WSFMA) are celebrating [Farmers Market Week](#) in Washington Aug. 5-11.

"Washington's farmers produce some of the best agricultural products around the world," Gregoire said. "From our world famous apples to our varied field greens, the goods produced in our state are second to none. And those who live here have easy access to these quality foods. I encourage all Washingtonians to take part in Farmers Market Week and enjoy this fine produce, while supporting our local farmers and small businesses."

Statewide, farmers markets belonging to the WSFMA reported \$39.6 million in sales in 2011, up from slightly less than \$39 million reported in 2010. Dozens of other farmers markets that are not members of the WSFMA also facilitate substantial sales, with dollars going directly to Washington family farmers and the local community.

"Consumers will find delicious high quality produce and food products at any of Washington's farmers markets," said Dan Newhouse, WSDA director. "Farmers selling at these markets are the face of agriculture for most people. They show just how important agriculture is for our communities large and small."

Farmers market leaders support the growth of markets across Washington and ways to improve how markets operate to better serve shoppers.

"We've been working hard to support farmers and market managers while creating more opportunities for residents to purchase great, fresh, local foods," said Karen Kinney, interim executive director of the WSFMA. "I'm thrilled that we continue to get national recognition in the media for the quality of so many of our farmers markets. If you haven't been to a farmers market, come see what it's about."

Making it easier for markets and vendors to accept shoppers' electronic cards and food-assistance benefits for food purchases has been a priority for the association. Consumers are finding it easier to make purchases without carrying a lot of cash. Nearly 90 percent of WSFMA member farmers markets accept checks

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from participants in the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (Women, Infants and Children FMNP), 84 percent accept Senior FMNP checks, and 54 percent feature wireless point-of-sale terminals capable of processing SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or food stamps) benefits through an electronic benefits transfer system.

“Accepting these federal program checks and cards, as well as credit and debit cards, are significant steps to meet shopper needs,” Kinney said. “Washington is a leader in efforts to increase access to healthy food for more of our residents, especially low-income families.”

For a directory of farmers market locations and operating hours, visit the [WSFMA website](http://www.wsfma.org) at [www.wafarmersmarkets.com/](http://www.wafarmersmarkets.com/)

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Click for a copy of Governor Chris Gregoire’s proclamation for Washington State Farmers Market Week at <http://agr.wa.gov/News/2012/FarmersMarketWeekProclamation2012.pdf>

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